



State Legislative Update for March 26 – April 1, 2016

Committee Hearings

House:

Tax committee: Rep. Sheldon Johnson's [HF 2505](#) was heard. This bill would increase the income level at which the \$750 credit begins to phase-out from \$30,000 to \$50,000, with no credit allowed for incomes of \$57,500 or higher. It would also expand eligibility by extending the credit to all disabled veterans. The bill supporters argue that this would reach a greater number of Veterans than the tax exemption of military pensions that was passed in the House tax bill that sits in conference now. While there was support for the bill there was a suggestion that the author works with Reps. Dettmer and Davids to make this bill work with the military pensions section of the tax bill. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion.

House Veterans Affairs Division heard the following bills-

[HF 2554](#) – Howe: In current law someone cannot mislead another into believing they are a military or police officer. This bill extends the statute to include all military officials and Veterans. The bill was passed and re-referred to Public Safety and Crime Prevention without any significant committee questions.

[HF 3416](#) – Howe: This bill clarifies hearing procedures for removal of Veterans from government (state and local) jobs. Representatives of the League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota Inter-County Association all shared that they have issues with the bill, but are absolutely willing to work with the author to work on concerns. MDVA is also working closely with all stakeholders to make sure Veterans still have this accommodation afforded to them. The bill was passed and re-referred to Government Operations and Elections.

[HF 3394](#) – Cornish: Bill requires that Veterans see a disclosure statement from for-profit companies that provide a service that Veterans could get for free through Veteran Service Organizations. No significant questions were asked. It was re-referred to State Government Finance.

[HF 3252](#) – Newberger: This bill extends the deadline for military members and Veterans returning from duty to renew their real estate license. This is the same bill that was heard last week in the Senate Commerce committee. The author offered an amendment with language that was worked out with the Commerce Department. There were no questions from committee members and it was re-referred to the House Commerce committee.

Job Growth and Energy Affordability heard [HF 2689](#) which would give money for a Veterans Memorial in Faribault. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill

Next week:

House Veterans Affairs Division

Room 200 - State Office Building at 12:45pm on Monday, April 4-

[HF 3109](#) – Dettmer: Small business procurement program provisions changed.

[HF 2868](#) – Pugh: Veterans from the state soldiers' assistance fund grants to pay for emergency dental care authorized, subtraction for dentists who provide charity care to veterans allowed, and money appropriated.

Recognition of WWII Veterans Francis Laqua and Elvin Ewert

Senate:

Senate State and Local Government: [SF 2782](#) authored by Sen. Anderson would create give a one year appropriation for emergency dental care grants for Veterans. MDVA is working with the Senator and Rep. Pugh, the House author, to ensure that this would be feasible on an administrative level so that the Veterans would actually get the benefits that is intended in the bill. The bill was passed and re-referred to Finance where it is expected to get a hearing, presumably in the State Departments and Veterans Budget Division. We are continuing to work with the stakeholders to craft an amendment.

Senate Commerce heard [SF 3085](#), the bill would extend the deadline for Veterans to renew their real estate licenses upon returning from active duty. The bill was passed and sent to the Senate floor.

State Departments and Veterans Budget Division held a Veteran centric hearing. It started out with MDVA staff (Mike McElhiney and John Powers) giving a 20-minute presentation about the funding and Federal application process regarding Veteran Home construction.

After the presentation the committee heard three bills-

[SF 131](#) – Sieben: This bill would increase the personal needs allowance for residents in domiciliary housing at the Veterans homes. Currently, those residents only receive \$90 a month. The bill would increase the allowance to \$122 for the first year and \$130 the next. After that, the allowance is adjusted annually by one-half of the percentage change of the Consumer Price Index on the first day of each calendar year. The committee thought was very supportive of this proposal. Sen. Chamberlain thought it was a no brainer considering the \$88,000 price tag on the first year of implementation. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion.

[SF 2317](#) – Saxhaug: Bill would provide a \$500,000 grant to Lutheran Social Services to provide mental health services to Veterans through its Veterans CORE program. It would also instruct LSS to conduct a study regarding the services they provide. This bill was also met well with committee members. It was laid over for possible inclusion.

[SF 3149](#) – Clausen: An informational hearing was given to this bill which would work to create an interim housing facility for Veterans who are unable to get into the Minnesota Veterans Homes. If the bill were to move forward it would start with a hearing in State and Local Government.

The State and Local Government committee heard Senator Clausen's [SF 3149](#). A delete all amendment was adopted that would appropriate \$250,000 towards a feasibility study that MDVA would conduct with a well-established non-profit. The bill was passed and re-referred to the Finance committee.

Next week:

NOTE: Next Friday (April 8) is the second committee deadline for bills in the legislature. Due to that, more bills may be heard in committee and everything is subject to change.

Legislation

A number of bills related to Veterans issues were introduced this week. Follow the [State Bill Tracker](#) for updates to these bills.

[HF 3681](#) – Anzelc: Disabled veteran tuition relief to attend Minnesota State Colleges and Universities institutions provided, and money appropriated.

[HF 3696](#) – Rosenthal: GI Bill benefit additional uses authorized, and GI Bill changes made.

[HF 3741](#) – Swedzinski: County board allowed to appropriate money for a veterans memorial anywhere in the county.

[SF 3251](#) – Abeler: A bill appropriating money for certain rent subsidies.

[SF 3309](#) – Hoffman: Veterans support for domestic abuse prevention, mental health services, chemical abuse treatment. Homelessness prevention honor guards compensation and veterans courts; veterans nursing home tax credit

[SF 3321](#) – Carlson: Veterans benefits service disclose requirements and disclosure statement development requirement